



Administrative Services Department
RISK MANAGEMENT / SAFETY DIVISION

Safety Newsletter

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AVOID INJURIES DURING YARD WORK!

Now that Spring is finally here many people are pulling out their lawn mowers, weed wackers, leaf blowers, and other power garden equipment. This is happening both at home and work! Many of us will be cleaning up our own yards while employees will be working in the parks and other City areas using roadside mowers and weed-wackers. Before heading outside, remember that accidents can, and unfortunately, do happen. According to the National Safety Council, more than 173,000 injuries were associated with yard

and garden equipment in 2005. Be aware of the risk for eye injuries from weed wackers, lawn mowers and blowers, wood chippers etc. Not only are the people doing the work prone to injury, but bystanders may also be subject to flying rocks, dirt and anything else kicked up by these various pieces of equipment. Please remember to use safety glasses or goggles to prevent eye injuries, and keep chutes closed to direct flying debris down to the ground. By taking some simple safety precautions, you can help eliminate the chance of being injured while fixing up your yard or working in our parks.

Lawn mowers account for the majority of injuries associated with yard or garden equipment, according to the National Safety Council.

Unfortunately, fatal accidents involving riding lawn mowers have occurred - with the risk of an accident being almost twice as likely with a riding lawn mower as a walk-behind mower. Here are some safety tips when operating a riding mower:

- ◆ Only allow the operator on the mower; never carry passengers.
- ◆ Clear the yard of people before mowing, and stop the mower if anyone enters the area.
- ◆ Slow down before turning.
- ◆ Mow up and down slopes only. Mowing across should be done with a walk-behind mower.
- ◆ Never leave the machine running. Turn off the blades, set the parking brake, stop the engine and remove the keys before dismounting.
- ◆ Never mow on wet grass, which can decrease traction and cause sliding.
- ◆ When you are finished with your yard work:

⇒ Make sure equipment is stored properly.
Improperly stored hoses can lead to tripping.

⇒ Ladders should be placed on their sides, and rakes should lie with tines down.



Rider-mower models made within the last 20 years should meet the 1986 ANSI B71.1 standard for consumer use and ANSI B71.4 for commercial use. These standards incorporate several safety features not found on older models

Check out equipment and surroundings before starting your task:

Check over all the equipment you plan to use to ensure it is in good condition and that any safety devices are in place and work correctly.



Walk around the area in which you plan to work to check for debris. Items like sticks, stones, metal, glass and wire can cause serious injuries when thrown by equipment.

Personal protective equipment isn't just for the workplace; it can help reduce injuries during yard work, too:

- ◆ Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing should be as close-fitting as possible to avoid being caught in moving parts of equipment.
- ◆ Protect your eyes with goggles or glasses.
- ◆ Protect your hearing when using motor-driven equipment.
- ◆ Wear sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles.
- ◆ Wear gloves when changing, sharpening or cleaning blades.

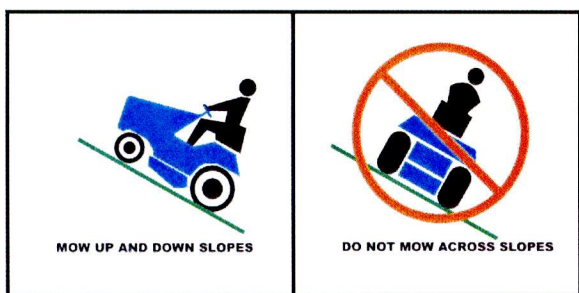


Push or walk-behind mowers can be just as dangerous as riding mowers!



The blade on the common lawn mower rotates to provide approximately 52 cuts per second. Translated into feet, the tip of the cutting blade of the mower travels about 300 feet in the same second. Each year, it is not uncommon to read or hear about the individual's foot that was caught underneath a walk-behind mower. Or about the person whose eye got hit by an object thrown by a mower. Here are a few reminders of techniques for safe operation with a walk-behind mower:

- 1) READ the owners manual—it contains information about your specific mower.
- 2) Wear proper clothing—close fitting clothes and shoes with toes and traction soles (preferably leather). Eye protection is always recommended. Ear protection will reduce the level of noise heard.
- 3) Clear the area to be mowed of debris that may be thrown—the same updraft that helps raise the grass for better mowing also helps to pick up objects.
- 4) Keep children and other bystanders away from the mowing area.
- 5) Mow in a FORWARD direction—more difficult at times but safer.
- 6) When mowing on a slope, mow ACROSS the slope with a walk-behind mower—this keeps a better distance between you and mower in case of a slip.
- 7) ALWAYS shut off the mower before adjusting or clearing clogs.
- 8) Allow the mower to cool before refueling. Use only approved safety containers to store fuel.



National Safety Council Yard & Garden Equipment Facts:

There is a higher population-based rate of injury among **persons 65 and older** than among persons 20-64 while using yard and garden equipment. Riding mower tip-over or rollover was an important hazard in this age group. Tripping over garden hoses has resulted in injuries and deaths!

Other injury patterns include blade contact with a variety of powered equipment, contact burns, sprains from starting equipment, and contact with sharp edges of the equipment.

SO REMEMBER

ALL POWER EQUIPMENT

- Always wear safety glasses
- Always use hearing protection
- Be aware of children and pets

GAS POWERED EQUIPMENT

- Never store gasoline in the house or attached garage
- Never fill hot equipment (fill before you start or allow to cool before refilling)

ELECTRIC POWERED EQUIPMENT

- Check power cords for damage before using
- Use a ground fault interrupt outlet
- Maintain control of the power cord to reduce possibility of cutting cord
- Do not use in the rain

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